

DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #111!

~^+^~

Hello, gentle Reader, and welcome to this universally indie edition of your beloved DVDVR- as we cover the wrestling from three different continents, wrestling that tell the big boys to shove it up their asses. Rippa clocks in with the fantab WCW handheld from back when you could watch it without saying, "What an absolute fucking waste of talent." Ah the Good ole days... That sexy Motherfucker- Tony gancarski- breathes the vapors of US Indie with a South Carolina Indie bonanza. Schneider tackles the coveted and beloved British TV which is angle-soaked and Danielsized. Me and Pete tackle to very nonconvergent ends of the Sleazy Japan Indie Spectrum as I tackle the elegant and beautiful TORYUMON while Pete gazes at the festering milky underbelly of Japan Indie World as he clocks in with the ONITA MOTHERFUCKING PRO. Ray wishes he was immersed with Indie-goodness as he stares straight in the face of crappy New Japan Juniors stinking up the joint, offsetting all that Lyger, Hamada and SHOCKER!! Plus the THEME OF THE WEEK, the WRESTLER OF THE WEEK and the SPIRIT OF SINGLES GOING STEADY but no actual SGS this week. Sup deep the sweet literary finaglings of PEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEETE.....

~%~

!@!@!@!@!@! ONITA PRO WRESTLING 6-27-99 Korakuen Hall (SAMURAI!)
(POGO PETE STEIN)

It's the first-ever Garbagy Feel-Good portion of the DVDVR as we take a look at what amounts to Onita's FMW revival shows... think of them as a puroresu equivalent to those 50s doo-wop band reunion tours. Actually, "Heroes Of Garbage Wrestling" might be a better analogy... SAITAMA PRO WRESTLING PRESENTS THIS IS "ZERO": Survival 3-Way Fucking Dance-REY PANDITA vs. PINCH-HITTER JOE vs. SURVIVAL TOBITA: "Hi, my name is Pinch-Hitter Joe and I'll be your indy scum opening-match wrestler tonight. Our specials this evening are 3-way lock-ups, some crappy matwork, a general lack of heat and some REALLY WEIRD shit." Joe and Pandita work together against Tobita until Pandita turns on Joe and pins him with the Gedo Clutch (accentuated with cheeky pose). All of a sudden some strange music gets cued up on the PA and Pandita loses it, running around the building acting like a monkey. I call an Ape Virginon run-in at this point but instead Tobita gives Pandita a piledriver and chokes him out at 5:57. This was a big batch of goofy... well, let's just say it was a big batch of goofy and move on.

MASANOBU KURISU vs. KENGO TAKAI: "He chairs, and chairs! And chairs and chairs and chairs! Chair chair chair, chair chair chair! The Masa Kurisu Shooooooooow!"

FMW Joshi All-Star Match: SHARK TSUCHIYA/CRUSHER MAEDOMARI/MISS MONGOL/COMBAT TOYODA vs. RIE/TSUPPARI MACK/KILLER IWAMI/EMI KOIZUMI: Now *this* is something else... Shark leaves her cutlery at home for a change as her group becomes the Shiny Happy Mad-Dog Military. At one point Iwami slaps a Kunze armbar on Crusher, at which point Shark beckons Yukie Nabeno to hit the ring and take over on the hold. Later on RIE

slaps a rolling cradle on Mongol. Emi (not *that* Emi...) then comes in but TOTALLY blows it (there's a great shot of Combat laughing her ass off on the apron), so Shark encourages RIE to come back in and show Emi how to do the move correctly. This time she pulls it off and Shark leads the crowd cheers for this. Shark and Combat then "turn" on each other, and they finally wrap this shindig up when Nabeno encores with a missile dropkick on Iwami so Shark can get the pin at 15:23 (no doubt trimmed for a reason on TV). Postmatch all nine pose for a reunion photo and warm fuzzies are had by all, then they all get together in the back like they're about to have the world's strangest pajama party. Not good by any stretch of the imagination, but entertaining in its own, blemished little way.

FMW 10th Anniversary 6-Man Tag Match: ATSUSHI ONITA/NISE ONITA/SAMBO ASAKO vs. MASASHI AOYAGI/KATSUJI UEDA/THE SHOOTER #1: Two words: Not Good. Sambo needs to find himself a Bro, Ueda was ancient 10 years ago, and Nise Onita is just like real Onita... except Onita doesn't suck. HAR HAR! Nise Onita taps a vein and gets KO'd by Ueda at 9:45 of my life that I'm never getting back.

Anywhere Streetfight Tag Match: SANSHIRO TAKAGI/EXCITING YOSHIDA vs. MASAO ORIHARA/THE SHOOTER #2: YES! The DDT boys invade DVDVR for the first time, and I get to review it! I'M THE GOD, I'M THE GOD!!! #2 and Exciting brawl off into the crowd while Orihara and Sanshiro work a neat spot where they each duck like 5 standing clotheslines before Orihara finally plants Sanshiro with an elbow. #2 and Sanshiro soon brawl to the back, where #2 practically bankrupts DDT by sending Sanshiro through the DDT merchandise table. "Not the 'Sanshiro 3:46' shirts! AH CRAP! We're in the red!" Before long they're duking it out on the elevated platform while Exciting and Orihara have it out in the ring. Orihara whips Exciting to the corner, flips the crowd off and charges, but Exciting blows mist in his face and takes over. While all of this is going on Sanshiro gets behind #2 and hits a KILLER German suplex on the platform for the pin at 11:54. Sanshiro has the greatest music ever: the Austin "KEE-RASH!" into what IMSMR is Heavy Metal's theme. Exciting Yoshida... isn't... but Sanshiro seems like a pretty good worker based on this. LLL member Jon Boy has reached GODHOOD status in my book based on him apparently finding a Sanshiro shirt in "fat-ass gaijin" size for me during his Japan trevails...

FOREVER FMW MEMORIAL MATCH: No-Rope Barbed-Wire Streetfight Tornado Double Hell 8-Man Tag Death Match: ATSUSHI ONITA/SHIGEO OKAMURA/SAMBO ASAKO/MITSUNOBU KIKUZAWA vs. GENICHIRO TENRYU/SHOJI NAKAMAKI/ICHIRO YAGUCHI/HIROSHI ONO: Tenryu comes out looking like "Tenkind," wearing a dress shirt and tie for this occasion. Onita and Tenryu immediately go at it; they each do the "no way you're whipping ME into the barbed-wire" spot, but Okamura dropkicks Tenryu into the wire to a funny pop. Tenryu returns the favor by sending Okamura out of the ring and onto the barbed-wire boards on the floor. Kikuzawa is soon the next to die at Tenryu's hands, as Tenryu MONKEY-FLIPS him from the ring to the barbed-wire boards and starts winging chairs at him. Onita tries to re-do the "piledriver on the table" spot that bombed against Pogo at the FMW show last fall, and it gets FUBAR'd here too with Nakamaki. Finally Tenryu and Nakamaki kill Sambo by suplexing him through a table, but Onita comes back on the entire team with a chair

and part of said table. BURUOFZAWOODSEEFUYAAWEERU! Sambo and Okamura double-team Tenryu after giving him a stuff piledriver off a chair, but in the meantime Nakamaki starts to unclip the barbed-wire. Yaguchi and Okamura trade "I'll try to powerbomb you on the barbed-wire but you'll backdrop me just in time" spots while Tenryu and Onita brawl on the apron. Tenryu finally pushes Onita onto the barbed-wire boards while at the same time Yaguchi wraps the unclipped barbed-wire around Kikuzawa. Tenryu eventually sends Onita back into the ring, where Yaguchi and Nakamaki give him a double-clothesline with a strand of barbed-wire (*nasty* garbage spot). Tenryu follows with the powerbomb but Okamura saves Onita. Kikuzawa (still wearing the barbed-wire shroud) splashes Ono and Onita gives him the TFPB for a near-fall while Tenryu proceeds to punch out Okamura in retaliation for breaking up *his* powerbomb. Yaguchi saves Ono, but Kikuzawa gives him another splash and Onita gets the pin off another TFPB at 15:42. Onita does his postmatch schtick for something like 18 hours afterwards.

Overall this is OK for FMW enthusiasts, and the concept is kind of cool. Stick with the DDT boys and the More-surreal-than-Headhunters-using-"Oye-Como-Va"- for-entrance-music womens' match.

~\$~

\$\$\$%\$%\$%\$%\$%\$%\$ UWA Wrestling Rampage October 1999 (Taped 4/11/99)
(PHIL SCHNEIDER)

This show marked the return of televised wrestling to England. The wrestling style is more U.S. Indy than British mat wrestling, but the shows had a fun atmosphere, with the feel of an old style territory wrestling program.

~!~

Show 1

Flying Phil Powers v. Mad Dog McPhie: Phil Powers seems to be the guy they are really pushing as they describe him as a technical wizard and a spectacular flyer. He didn't show me very much in this match, as he looked like a Bangers and Mash Inferno Kid, complete with unnecessary fringe and mediocre missile dropkick. Mad Dog McPhie was the token ferocious big guy who didn't do much, but had a nice enough german suplex. McPhie was accompanied by his evil American manager Steve Linksy. Short match with Powers getting a flash inside cradle for the 1987 WWF

Superstars main event ending.

2 Far Gone v. Death Squad: 2 Far Gone are your generic babyface tag team, kind of a Kidney Pie Young Stallions, while the Death Squad was your basic redneck asskicker tag team reinvented as Sheffield soccer thugs. Iron Duke Lynch sported the full on Jerry Saggs shaved sides mullet, while Mark Myers had the bad perm, they were big, but in a lots of beer kind of way, not a weight lifting kind of way. Death Squad had themselves some decent looking ladies (who didn't smile, so I couldn't see their teeth) at that made them defacto crowd favorites. This was basically a squash, as the Death Squad beat the young punks like ManU fans who walked into the wrong pub. Mark Myers did most of the work, and was really stinky, hitting some Shawn Stasiak level clotheslines, Lynch

barely got in so I imagine how bad he must have been. 2 Far Gone got in a double dropkick or two, but this wasn't their day.

Tiger Mask IV v. Jason Cross: TMIV came over from Michinoku Pro to fight for the vacated British Commonwealth title, facing the Union Jack decked Jason Cross. Tiger Mask IV obviously wanted to do an homage to Tiger Mask I v. Dynamite Kid, as he was in full Sayama aping mode, which is a digression from his recent asskicker persona. Tiger Mask IV looked really crisp doing the Sayama counters and such, which is a big improvement over 2 years ago, where he looked more like the Koji Kanemoto Tiger Mask than the original. Jason Cross ain't no Dynamite Kid though, while Cross didn't get smoked in the exchanges, he looked really ass on offense, including hitting a sub-Renegade handspring elbow. TMIV kept this together good though, taking Jason by the hand. The psychology was pretty basic, with a race to the moonsault, with both guys missing an attempt, before Tiger Mask hits one for the win. In many ways this was the most impressed I have ever been with Tiger Mask IV. He has been in much better matches, but here he carried a worker who was green as Shane Douglas's urine to a very good match, which is a lot harder than having good matches with TAKA Michinoku or Great Sasuke.

Big Poppa T v. Mark Sloan: Hey this really stunk, Big Poppa T is a big fat guy in a leather bondage mask who used to be the Nbody guard for the President of the Congo and Nwas banned from amateur wrestling because of his violent nature and Nwas an ex-Executioner who killed people and probably another 2 dozen or so tired 80's WCCW heel clichés. This match was a total squash, as he no sold all of Mark Sloan's offense and got the submission with a Texas cloverleaf. Big Poppa really stinks but he has quite the intriguing gimmick, as he is going for a evil savage black guy / S+M bondage gimp complete with leather mask and menacing dominatrix valet. Did they just use the random gimmick generator? What's next Dirty White Boy Black Ninja? Exotico Cowboy?

Johnny Storm v. Paul Sloane: Paul Sloane is the rookie sensation, kind of a boiled cabbage Goldberg with the puncher gloves, bald head and spear. Johnny Storm has the 123 Kidish look with lightning bolts and anorexic physique. Not much of a match, as it is an excuse for Mad Dog and Phil Powers run-ins to set up next week's tag match. Powers did hit an okay little running plancha.

~!~

Show 2

Hot Stuff Stevie Knight v. Jody Flash: The match was scheduled to be Stevie Knight v. Anarchist Doug Williams but the evil Steve Linsky comes out and tells the Anarchist that he has to save his energy for Christopher Daniels. Jody Flash (who wrestled in the Michinoku Pro Mask League as Dokko Chan, and may be the most spectacular high flyer in the world) then petitions the fossilized commissioner for the shot, and we have Flash v. Knight. This is a Stevie Knight squash with Jody playing bump boy, including taking a backdrop driver, released German suplex and a running liger bomb, Flash takes almost every bump right on his neck, and definitely proves his insanity. Knight looked good, employing a pretty 90's offense with crispness.

Although a lot of that crispness had to do with Flash bumping like a freak for them. I would like to see a rematch, booked more competitively.

Kerry Cabrero v. Gran Naniwa: This was a pretty good match, with Cabrero carrying the lazy, uninspired Naniwa. Naniwa isn't afraid to come to England and spend an entire match playing Mr. Fuji. Cabero hits a super fast amateur takedown to start, and wrestles for two during the entire first 2/3rds of the match. Naniwa does wake up a little for the finish, hitting a plancha and all (although that gets trumped by Cabrero's chair dive.) We do get the rare sight of Naniwa actually hitting his second rope elbow drop. Naniwa gets the majority of the offense, but does the job to a rydeen bomb. Naniwa probably wasn't too happy about doing the job, and that is probably why he sucked ass through most of the match.

Christopher Daniels v. 100% British Beef Danny Royal: Danny Royal looks more like 100% dianabol. Chis Daniels is probably the best Indy worker in the world and a damn good import for the UWA. Royal has a pretty vanilla MOVESET!, but Daniels is so crisp that he carries the Blood Pudding Chris Walker, to a nice little wrestling match. Daniels wins with the Angel Wings (spinning pedigree) and the Last Rites (twisting reverse neckbreaker).

Phil Powers + Paul Sloane v. Mad Dog Mc Phie + Johnny Storm: This was a grudge tag match, set up by the two singles matches on the last show. The first part of the match was pretty dicey as Sloane was face-in-peril and looked really green and out of place, being out of position on several moves, although Storm did take a bunch of nice bumps. The end was pretty great though as Powers and McPhie take to the floor, with Powers giving Mad Dog a power bomb on the floor (which was revenge for an earlier incident STORYLINES!!) Sloane then put Storm on his shoulders with Powers coming off for a top rope dropkick, with Storm taking a Henry Godwin like bump right on his head and neck.

~!~

Show 3

Alex Shane + Leon Murphy v. Death Squad: Murphy cuts the worlds greatest promo before this match, Shane is a pretty boy type and is talking all about how sexy he is, and Leon steps in with To be honest I don't really care about good looks, I'm an ugly man and I can't get any uglier, so hit me as much as you want, I'm tougher then you. The match didn't live up to the interview (all though to be fair, what match could. Hell Misawa v. Kawada '94 would pale in comparison) as the craptastic Death Squad stink up the ring again. The incompetent Myers even rolls the wrong way on a rolling senton, taking an impromptu guillotine leg drop. Shane kills himself good in the finish, as he attempts a twisting quebrada senton, and doesn't rotate far enough, Tiger Driver 91ing himself. Myers drops the anticlimactic leg for the pin.

Tiger Mask IV v. Gran Naniwa: Naniwa is Freedom Dogarific in the beginning as he masters his ass Austin Idol offense. TM kicks him really hard in the face a couple of times, and the last 4 or so minutes of this BROADWAY!!! match are pretty okay, with the highlight being a beautiful Tiger Mask plancha. After the draw, evil Naniwa

attempts to rip his mask off, furthering a feud which will never continue in England and will be ignored in Japan.

Johnny Storm v. Jason Cross: Good highflying match with Storm hitting a second rope Orihara moonsault and bumping like a madman, cementing his place as underground guy to watch. Then in a lamentable booking trend which appears to cross national boundaries, Big Poopa T waddles to the ring and screws up a perfectly acceptable cruiserweight match. FUCK YOU VINCE RUSSO!!

Anarchist Doug Williams v. Fallen Angel Christopher Daniels: This was the big match that they had been building towards. The winner would get the #10 spot in the TV Title Gauntlet match. Williams looked good in this match, although Daniels was definitely carrying. Angel gets some heat by cutting a semi filthy promo about placing the blast on all the British Ladies. They started the match, with a bunch of reversals and flips and counters, all of which were really nice. Williams hit the big highspot with a totally out of control springboard plancha. The end came with Williams hitting a German suplex, but Hot Stuff Stevie Knight distracts the referee, then Daniels comes back and hits the Last Rites for the pin. This was the best match of the show, and Daniels shows that he is a world class worker, by delivering with a guy he had never worked with before.

The TV shows as a whole were pretty enjoyable. The announcers were knowledgeable (calling a Liger bomb, a Liger Bomb for example) and the booking seemed coherent (if not a little run-in heavy). Kerry Cabrero, Stevie Knight, Johnny Storm, Jody Flash and Doug Williams are all really good talents, with Jason Cross, Phil Powers and Mad Dog McPhee all being quite serviceable. I would like to see them incorporate more of a British style to their matches, and getting some veterans like Dave Taylor or Johnny Saint to help train would be a big asset. I hope the UWA catches on, because I would hate to see British wrestling fall into the dustbin of history.

~#~

Amerikkkan Pro Wrestling- March 1999 Š Upstate SOUTH CAROLINA
(Anthony Gancarski)

I have six hours of this to get through, but due to a nice case of influenza I only did one this week. I pass the savings on to you!

SPECIAL FORCES (from "Land of the Airborne") V. K KRUSH and ICE PICK: Special Forces are two doughy guys in Army-Navy surplus camos. Ice Pick is a less athletic Ice Train, and K Krush tries to work for four here, from coming out and rapping to We Are Family to hitting a flying bodypress on a Special Force outside the ring. The rest of this is utter junk, but God bless that K Krush. I think SC has a low unemployment rate, so all four of these guys can kick it 9 to 5 style at any number of local carwashes.

BIG HAMMER (with "Attorney Jeff G. Bailey") V. BACKSTREET SONNY STONE: Our boy Hammer is a "heel" and he's sort of working the Fred Avery/Big Bubba Rogers body type. Sonny Stone is our Television Champ, and a face who comes out to "Backstreet's Back All

Right." Only in South Cackalacky. Hammer sets the tone for this by blowing forearm smashes Š something I didn't believe was possible. The Champ retaliates by blowing a cross bodyblock. Way to go, Champ. The only Backstreet Boy with a mullet and love handles. Whip ass.

CHIEF JAY EAGLE in THE EAGLE'S NEST: Looks like the Eagle's Nest is in a welfare hotel. This is apparently some sort of Pippin's Pit/Mulligan's Barbeque shtick. Chief Jay Eagle starts talking smack about "Nature Boy 2000" Shane Austin, and eventually BackstreetSonny Stone comes in wearing purported street clothes and starts cutting a promo of his own. Sports Entertainment for all! Eagle tells us that his cast will come off soon and he can start laying in "tomahawk chops" once more. Backstreet chimes in Š "you're damn right, Chief!" Š and puts up his hand for a High-Five from the Injun, who is looking off camera. A few seconds later, Eagle turns his head and slaps Backstreet's hand and you can just taste the camaraderie.

TERRY AUSTIN V MAGNUM JESSE TAYLOR: It's as if they got these names from a Random Name Generator. The prematurely grey-coiffed Austin enters wearing a swank t-shirt with a snake on the back (Dollar General, \$4.44), and Taylor Š who enters to no appreciable crowd pop from the dozens in attendance Š is announced as the "second biggest fan favorite in APW", right behind the charismatic Backstreet Sonny, of course. This was pretty much straight outta Techwood Drive except for a mistimed leapfrog spot. Magnum goes over with a belly-to-belly. Eh.

BEACH BLONDES V. JASON DAVIS and LIGHTNING LEE STORM: The Blondes dare to transgress, coming out to the 2001 Theme wearing Frederick's of Hollywood knockoff boudoir robes. They whoo. Shane Austin is one of the Blondes, and he does perhaps the most feeble Flair chops ever. The Blondes have flybacks. The horror. The horror. Oh, my God. The horror. Their opponents clear them out of the ring, and then blow a double baseball slide. Figure-Fours from both Blondes end this eventually.

FABULOUS PLAYBOY BUDDY ROSE JUNIOR INTERVIEWS ROUGH RUSTY RIDDLE and SENSATIONAL SUMMER: Joel Gertner Junior might have been a more appropriate moniker, Buddy. You can't claim the Perschmann legacy just because you're fat and have a mullet. Mad props for the cummerbund and jeans look, though. Riddle sports the requisite mullet as well, which is great. Sensational Summer has a sort of Incense Vendor at West VA Fleamarket thing going, what with her paunch and home perm and all. All this vignette needed, really, was another fat woman in a flannel shirt and fanny pack named Tanya Terrific to stake her claim to Rusty. And, Lo! This vignette in fact did have said woman, and my outsized jaw did hit the floor. Rusty informed both women that there was plenty of him to go around.

HARDCORE HITMAN HUNTER V TWISTED SISTER: You know you aren't a workratecentric promotion whenÉ your lead heel wins a TV main event with a heart punch. This segued abruptly into a COMING NEXT WEEK promo, featuring sped up footage of a tag match between

four truckers set to some lite-jazz ish muzak, kinda like the love theme from a Patrick Dempsey movie one might see on USA. Too sweet!

~|~

WCW Handheld - December 29, 1992 (Philadelphia, PA)

(PHIL RIPPA)

One good thing the person shooting this handheld did was catching the enormous amount of empty seats in the arena. Poor WCW, I think history is repeating itself. In fact it is. The card was held the day after Starrcade. That Starrcade had the worst (until now) Lethal Lottery.

Paul E. Dangerously vs. Madusa

See Madusa got kicked out of the Dangerous Alliance for screwing up. Paul E. gets on the STICK. First blames Arn Anderson and Larry Zbyszko for kicking her out. He then claims it is because she is a woman and stinks. Being in Philly, Paul E. gets cheered for this. The NmatchÓ stinks. Madusa delivers some weak kicks. At least she is pre-implants so she looks like she can still wrestle. This went by very quickly thanks to the magic of fast forward.

Scotty Flamingo vs. Johnny B. Badd - Boxing Match

We all know how good wrestlers boxing can be. Vinnie Vegas seconds Flamingo. 2 Cold Scorpio seconds Badd. Because I am in the holiday spirit, I will refrain from making various tasteless jokes. In fact, I will refrain from making comments about this fiasco. Lots of *cough* boxing *cough* with bits of wrestling thrown in. If you have seen any sorts of these before you have seen this.

Barry Windham vs. Dustin Rhodes

Okay, I am feeling like testing my history so here we go. Slid this piece of history amongst the myriad Windham turns. Barry Windham and Dustin Rhodes had teamed on and off for the last year and a half or so. When Windham had his hand broken by Anderson and Zbyszko, he brought in Ricky Steamboat as Dustin's partner at Clash XVII. Rhodes and Steamboat won the tag titles that evening, perhaps planting some seeds of jealousy. Fast forward into 1992. Steve Williams and Terry Gordy had come in and ran rough shot over the tag team division culminating in unifying the NWA and WCW tag titles. The team they beat in the finals of the tournament was Windham/Rhodes. Everyone expected Gordy & Williams to lose the belts to the Steiners but that never happened. In September of that year, the team that finally beat them was Windham and Rhodes. Two months later, Windham and Rhodes lost the belts to Steamboat and Shane Douglas. Windham preceded back to the dark side for the 206th time. In fact, Starrcade had not been a good night for Windham as he and Brian Pillman failed to wrest the tag belts away from Steamboat & Douglas. He then was the last man eliminated by the Great Muta in the Battle Bowl. Anyway, being in Philadelphia, Rhodes is rightly booed and Windham gets a immense BARRY chant. The match is just there. Windham has started to get on in age and Rhodes isn't wrestling Vader in the Semis of the King of Cable tournament so this match is a wash. You know it is bad when the ref takes the biggest bump of the match. Windham wins to please the crowd.

Vader/Masa Chono vs. Great Muta/Sting

Well along with Jushin Liger, Chono and Muta are probably the most recognizable wrestlers from Japan for the WCW rubes. That means that the crowd is indifferent too them. Just as if they were part of the regular undercard workers. In that great jingoistic booking of Bill Watts, Chono and Muta have to wrestle each other because God Forbid we ignored ethnicity in a wrestling angle. Chono is sporting the NWA Heavyweight belt, which of course incites a big NWe Want FlairÓ chant. Sting and Vader had an amazing feud that I would rank up in the Top 5 feuds of the decade. I was greatly disappointed in this match though. Chono completely mails it in and there is barely any Sting vs. Vader. Muta gets the crowd to pop for the handspring elbow. I did like VaderÕs attempt to put the Scorpion on Sting. Of course, that was the only piece of psychology in the match. I guess it was decent enough for a house show but I was wanting for more.

Jushin Liger/Kensuke Sasaki vs. Shane Douglas/Ricky Steamboat

Now this is the money match. Everyone is given huge applause except Douglas. Oh how times changed. Of course, it could have been because of DouglasÕ King-Sized Dynamic Dudesqe Mullet. This baby rocks it is given 20 minutes. Douglas and Sasaki donÕt fuck anything up and let Liger and Steamboat dictate most of the action. Besides DouglasÕ mullet, the only other flaw of the match was the fact that Liger kept channeling Ric Flair (doing the figure four, chopping, etc.) which kept encouraging the crowd to chant. (Especially, the group of people sitting right next to the camera so I was treated to the sounds of a guy doing a NWHOOÓ that sounded like an ambulance.) Steamboat sells every little thing, which hammers home how much selling is a lost art in the U.S. After getting his back worked over, Steamboat remembers to sell it even when delivering a backdrop of his own. Douglas lies by the unwritten rule that if you team with Steamboat, you must produce at least 10 armdrags. The first 10 minutes are dedicated to Steamboat and Douglas in control including making quick tags for the sake of making quick tags. Liger and Sasaki gain control and work over Douglas for awhile. Liger and Sasaki manage to stave off a hot tag to Steamboat and start going for the win. A second rope moonsault by Liger brings the New Japan boys as close to the belts as they were ever going to see. Actually, if you forget about the fact that Douglas/Steamboat are the champions, then the match is even more enjoyable because you get wrapped up in the idea that Liger and Sasaki have a chance to win. That is one of things I will credit Bill Watts and Jim Ross for is their booking. Guys who today are labeled in certain categories could be booked and have credible chances back in the day. Liger, who is considered to be nothing more than a Light Heavyweight by many, was getting people behind him and believing in him because of his ability to wrestle and tell a story in the ring. Brian Pillman was very similar. I mean hell; later on this same tape there is a Vader/Steve Austin vs. Tom Zenk/Marcus Bagwell match. Normally, you wouldnÕt think that would be watchable but it is. (Well maybe IÕm stretching a little). Okay, I am done incoherently rambling.

~+~

NEW JAPAN- Best of the Super J VI : Part 1

(REV RAY DUFFY)

I borrowed this from Pete. This was pretty much the "Stuff that didn't get on TV from Block A" tape.

(Super) Shocker v. Jushin Lyger : Super Shocker is just regular Shocker from EMLL. This starts out with both guys taking it to the mat and exchanging submissions. Shocker works on Lyger's leg when he gets in control with some good looking knee drop knee breaker type moves. Lyger busts out his goofy super wind up as if for a punch into an eye poke. Lyger goes for the shotay a number of times in the match and Shocker keeps avoiding him with drop toe holds. Shocker busts out some graceful stuff like his tope fake where he dives over the ropes, does a handstand on the apron and lands on his feet to hit the guy on the floor. He also has the rudo "slap myself repeatedly in the chest" ala Shu el Guerrero down pat. Lyger the NJPW heavyweight no sells a running move, dares them to do another spot and goes on offense hitting a shotay and one in the corner. Shocker hits a tripped out flying headscissors/small package type move that was cool. Lyger ends up winning this with a brainbuster. A good and fun match.

Masaaki Mochizuki v. Tatsuhiro Takaiwa : Masaaki... you deserve soooo much better my friend. Here's a surprise, Takaiwa's a no selling sack of shit. I don't see why they don't just put him in face paint and run him and Sasaki as the Hellraisers 2K. A lot of this is Takaiwa no selling Mochizuki's kicks and then being his usual big move, no transitions self. Takaiwa teases a spot where he's on the apron and catches a Mochizuki high roundhouse kick and grabs him over the ropes for a Death Valley Bomb, but they both fall to the floor. Mochizuki hits a series of offense when Takaiwa runs into an ax kick. Mochizuki hits a spring drop kick, a german suplex and then follows it with a great running roundhouse kick right to the face. Takaiwa gets a near fall following a lariat when Mochizuki flips out of a powerbomb attempt. Takaiwa keeps hitting powerbombs and lariats, but Mochizuki keeps kicking out. Mochizuki eventually gets the win after reversing yet another powerbomb, another DVB attempt and hitting his run up the ropes enzugiri. Takaiwa tries to no sell it and hit a lariat, but Mochizuki ducks it and hits the Dragon suplex for the win. Stink, thy name is Mengiwa.

Gran Hamada v. Tatsuhiro Takaiwarrior : NJPW providing a large "lean on the fast forward" section of this tape. This is a rare Takaiwa match in that he actually works an armbar or two. Hamada gets a cross armbreaker in which Takaiwa tries to lift out of into a powerbomb, but Hamada turns it into a wakigatame. Takaiwa catches a Hamada pescado and drops him across the railing. Takaiwa catches Hamada on the top rope going for a top rope rana and goes for a powerbomb, which Hamada turns into a DDT off the top. Takaiwa eventually hits the endless rebound powerbomb, the DVB and the lariat for the win. Why won't the Ohara and Goto lobby to feud with Takaiwa already so he can move up and stink up the heavyweight division already?

Masaaki Mochizuki v. Jushin Lyger : They do a quick segment where both avoid some strikes from each other and Mochizuki drops Lyger with a running shotay following a Lyger attempt. Mochizuki takes Lyger to the floor, whips him to the railing and follows in with a leg lariat, followed by a series of roundhouses while Lyger is against the railing. Lyger fights off a suplex attempt back in the ring, so Mochizuki drops him with a high roundhouse kick. The key to this match is the fact that Lyger sells Mochizuki's kicks like they hurt, a concept that Takaiwa and Kanemoto couldn't get through their fucking thick skulls in their tournament matches with Mochizuki. Lyger does do a hulk up during a few of the kicks and counters with a dragon screw.

He takes Mochizuki to the floor and shotays him over the railing. Lyger goes to shotay him against the post, but misses and Mochizuki changes his attack to Lyger's arm. He hits him with an assortment of kicks and armbar attempts. When Lyger fights off his superplex attempt, Mochizuki

turns it into a side arm takedown and floats over into a step over armbar. Mochizuki releases Lyger after hitting a german suplex at one and says that he's not done, following up with a running roundhouse kick to the head. He goes for a brainbuster, Lyger fights him off, Mochizuki tries for a wakigatame, but Lyger shotay's him with his good hand. Lyger then hits a frog splash for two. Mochizuki flips out of a powerbomb attempt, hits an ax kick, the run up the ropes kick and a dragon suplex for a near fall. He and Lyger fight over a hold, Lyger hits the koppou kick. Lyger keeps getting situations where he nearly has Mochizuki with a finisher, but Mochizuki flips out or counters them. Lyger hits a shotay and a running lyger bomb for two. He hits a brainbuster and follows it up with a final shotay for the win. This was a good match.

Koji Kanemoto v. Tatsuhiro Takaiwa : It's the man I really hate v. the man who continues to earn my hate every match I watch him. Kanemoto is quickly earning his way on my shitlist as he's someone who has the tools to be a great wrestler, but it seems like he's too much of an idiot to pull off good matches. Yeah, I know his gimmick is that he's a total prick, but no selling to be a prick is fucking annoying and gets old really fast. Anyway, there's a match here. Both guys do segments where they work on the others legs. Kanemoto gets in a bunch of kicks. Takaiwa's all about lariats, DVB's and powerbombs. Hey, he even kicks out of Kanemoto's moonsault at one. Kanemoto gets in in a crossarmbreaker to tap out. Whatever.

Gran Hamada v. Koji Kanemoto : Koji tries being a dick early in the match, but Hamada won't take much of his shit and goes over Kanemoto's legs for a good part of the match. Koji earns my hate by taking a Swinging DDT off the apron to the floor and selling it for like 15 seconds. Koji, you're in with Gran FUCKING Hamada, not Hayato Nanjo. I don't care if he doesn't work for the promotion, he's a legend, arguably, the best working legend in the world right now, SELL FOR HIM. Hamada does get in a segment where he gets kanemoto on the ropes. He hits a top rope rana, a diving lariat and a diamond cutter off the top rope. After not being able to get the pin, Hamada starts working on the arm. He gets in a cross armbreaker and a wakigatame. Kanemoto drop kicks Hamada out of the air when he tries to do a cross body out of a corner. Kanemoto hits a Falcon Arrow and a moonsault for the win. It was good, but could have been SOOOOOO much better.

Tatsuhiro Takaiwa v. (Super) Shocker : *FOUR* Takaiwa matches! On a "BEST OF" the Super J tape. New Japan Pro-Wrestling, what a bunch of fucking kidders! Takaiwa actually does a bit of mat work in this. It's a start. Takaiwa works a head scissor, which Shocker escapes out of into his knee drop knee breaker move into a figure four. Shocker gets in his corner lariat into a bulldog spot. He goes for a suplex, but Takaiwa hits a brainbuster and a lariat. Shocker ranas out of a powerbomb attempt, hits a leg lariat and a la majistral for 2. Takaiwa kicks out of a moonsault at 1. He also clotheslines Shocker out of the sky when he attempts a body block. Endless rebound powerbomb for two. Takaiwa sets Shocker up top for

something, but Shocker escapes and hits the fireman's carry into a Michinoku Driver II move for the win.

A mixed bag in this bracket. WAAAAAAAAAY too much Takaiwa for my tastes.

~&~

%^%^%^%^%^% TORYUMON on GAORA 8/24/1999- DRAGON HARVEST 99
(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

This show was aptly named by the Random Name Generator that GAORA is not afraid to use. It's time to harvest another crop of rookies and HOLY FUDGE! here you go. TORYUMON is really not afraid to deeply pump out the youngsters who frickin supply the ROCK- as they showcase the all good Horiguchi, Mochizuki, Arai and Kanda rookie punk sensations that, for some reason as shown on this tape, WRESTLE THEIR ASSES OFF. These guys actually come up with a MOTY candidate between them and ALL THIS before Magnum Tokyo and his makcing dancers even appears. BOY!

Genki Horiguchi VS. Sasumu Mochizuki: JIMINY FUCKING CRIMINY, this match is really just THOROUGHLY WONDERFUL. This is the best Junior match of 1999 other than Magnum vs Sasuke- hell! maybe it's better- and you know how I've gone to bat for Magnum vs Sasuke like a champ talking it up and singing its praises like Magnum Tokyo is my illegitimate son or something (NOT THAT HE IS! I'VE NEVER EVEN BEEN TO NAGOYA!! YOU CAN ALL GO TO HELL!....) This match is pretty astounding for a couple of reasons. Genki is less surfer-intensive for some reason but the goofiness that will get him over in the land of the Rising Sun is still present. Genki is young, wiry, and tough as nails; is a good midgrade flier and has many intangibles that all pitch in to make this match as great as it turned out to be. Bedecked in a BodyGlove and with odd grey highlights in his hair, Genki is the Magnum Tokyo of his class- a natural face with charisma and ability, supplying the flashiness and lovable demeanor that drags the crowd in and gives the rudo something to work with. Mochizuki has REALLY come along since the last TORYUMON review as he is all about the matwork and elaborate lucha entanglements which will ROCKET HIM INTO MY HEART! Sasumu is bedecked in a hideous purple outfit and works solid way more than flashy for the most part and is every bit the Judo Suwa of this class of TORYUMON. Together these show a great new possibility for TORYUMON- a promotion that was beginning to get some backlash on the NET! as a pretender to the Mid-Nineties Michinoku Throne and a conglomeration of spotmachines and cheap heat Seekers- overrated and flashing in the pan. Here is the second wave to add to the first burgeoning promise of the first wave of UD grads who stormed the Junior world and staked it's claim, and here is the second fruit of UD wrestling loins and it cements the future of the promotion as the factory creating the New Japan Styled Juniors. The first part of the match is a man-sized dose of cool-ass midgradely elaborate armdrags- as they alternate Steamboat-level DEEP to freaky JAPANESE armdrags. From there they feign shootstyle submission and then they beat the hell out of each other for a while and then it gets to the part that makes this one of the best of 1999- they do this whole trifecta of moves and transitions that go beyond the surface Ultimo Dragonism that the first wave of TORYUMON graduates merely dabbled in. This match is Ultimo's vision of the future as these two youngsters take the components that made Ultimo great and create a whole universe of wrestling in one match . The build is skewed and weird

but psychologically sound and technically breath-taking. The stiffness of the strikes is big enough to work as effective transitions just like in BattlARTS, but there is AMAZING fucked-up lucha roll-ups that BattlARTS never sees. The roll-ups and submissions are amazingly creative and the highspots look like they hurt like hell, but each is sold perfectly- with a leaning towards selling too long which you NEVER see in Japan these days. There are little psychological things that make this a great match- Genki hits his Genki Driver2000 twice and each time there is enough time before the cover to protect the finisher but still allow for a kick out. Mochizuki kicks the hell out of Genki and then gets a GREAT fucked-up Cross-Armbreaker Variation TWICE- the first with a simple ropebreak, the second time- Mochizuki traps the leg and looks to have the Submission, but Genki kicks Mochizuki's hands apart to go for his first Genki Special (A cross between a Stretch Plum and that rolling Abdominal Stretch that Dos Caras uses- see I toldja it was pretty fucked up) which is broken by a ropebreak- SO THUS Genki MIRRORS Mochizuki's point of psychology by trapping Mochizuki's leg when he gets his second Genki special submission hold applied. It's was fucking beautiful and ASTOUNDING that it was coming from two guys who have been wrestling for less than a year. TORYUMON isn't afraid to have the young wrestlers who are just fucking GREAT and add these two to the list. Mochizuki looks to have REAL Ass-stomper potential that is only hinted at in this match- as he isn't afraid to kick Genki right in the frickin face really hard just to see the look on his face. Genki has a real charisma and can also wrestle his motherfucking ass off. The totally bitching thing about this match is that these two have really taken in what the best ideas of the current wrestling situation in Japan and added the hardcore psychological basis that Ultimo drives into their skulls from day one. I mean, they hit fucked-up cross-armbreaker variations that would have Minoru Tanaka and Ikuto Hadaka saying, "Uh,,, Minoru, What the hell was THAT?" There were freaked out neck-breakers and an Atomic Shin-breaker that would have Dean Malenko saying, "Hmmm, I should steal that." I dunno. The stiffness, the True State Of The Art moves, the build, the hot as hell finish- This match is fucking great. Go watch this somehow.

Masaaki Mochizuki VS. Chocoball Kobe: The start of the Chocoball faceturn starts here as Choco gets a SHIIMA-esque leather and tassels shortpants to replace the crappy fatigue-based outfit he was sporting and gets his ass beaten DEEPLY into the ground by suitably dick-like Masaaki Mochizuki (though Masaaki sells the rookies early flurry like a pro- just to further piss you off that Kanemoto and that shithead Takaiwa never sold for HIM in a similar situation.) They really beat the holy hell out of each and it's pretty great. Chocoball shows a lot more in this than on the last TORYUMON TV show and when in with the fabulous Masaaki Mochizuki, I guess that's a viable option. Choco is actually pretty good at doling out the Takeshi Ono-like scrawny, mealy punk ass-kicking as he is REALLY the skinny redneck in your homeroom who never lost any fights because he was such a hateful little bastard. Chocoball strikes a chord with every man's Inner Scrawny Redneck Punk Burner Hatchet Fan and I revel along with you. Mochizuki revels in his own groove of being Every Man's Inner Brother Of Redneck Kobe's Friend: The Brother That Greases Trucks For A Living And Cuts His Cast Off His Own Broken Leg With A Pocket Knife And Is Scary And Psychotic And Beats The Hell Out Of Scrawny Redneck Bastards Because He Is A Big Redneck Bastard. Masaaki thus opts to show how hard he can beat the living breathing shit out of the young Chocoball- with Chocoball crawling out of pinning combinations and struggling to his feet at the eight count after Masaaki hits some

elaborate spinning, flying flippy, jumpy kicks to the head. Chocoball shows all kinds of fighting spirit and shit at the end so you know CIIMA is gonna be beating the hell out of young Kobe PDQ. Mochizuki crushes him in a myriad of ways. It's FUN!

Kennichiro Arai VS. Yasushi Kanda: Hey, Kanda has blue hair! WILD! Arai is doing this gimmick where he is Toshiro Mifune from Seventh Samurai- what with him wandering in with his big bottle of booze and scruffy, scratchy demeanor. And- by the way- this match is really good. Arai and Kanda really beat the living hell out of each other in a stiff as hell, Strongstyle-meets-US Pro Style match and it's really really good all the way to the finish. Kanda starts off by bludgeoning Arai's back after Arai takes the first of many painful looking bumps- with this one being a fully extended sprawling crash into the chairs. Kanda is all fun as a testosterone-drenched penis-head going all heelish on Arai- who returns the jerkiness as soon as he can. Arai hits the first of his many headbutts to get on offense halfway through the match and Kanda takes an even more spectacular sprawling flight into the chairs. After a while, Arai starts working on Kanda's shoulder - setting up for his inverted Fujiwara Armbar to kill time until the fight for the finishers. Arai has added two really cool moves to his repertoire- the Springboard Diving Headbutt and the World's Hurtiest Jawbreaker (the SPECS: Arai sits his opponent on the top rope turnbuckle and grabs his opponents wrist and sticks them behind his opponents head while placing his own head under his opponents chin and then drags his opponent off the top turnbuckle chinfirst onto his head. It's pretty fucking great.) The ending is all a big fight for the most tooth-busting finisher and Arai wins out and sets up his INSANE No-Look Headbutt for the big win. This was cool for a couple of reasons, the main one being that this was a juniors match based on beating the other guy's ass into the ground- as opposed to tricky Lucha approximations and graceful highflying. This was old school and I dug it the most.

Shiima Nobunaga / Judo Suwa / Sumo Fuji VS. Makoto / Yoshiyuki Saito / Stoker Ichikawa: This was basically a squash as CRAZY MAX beats up on the three oddballs- so this sucked for the most part. The ending was pretty hot actually, as Saito and Makoto (SAITO! FROM IWA RESTART! HOW DID I NOT RECOGNIZE HIM LAST TIME? Mayhap I'm an idiot....) are really good and nifty and stuff and SUWA makes Makoto look god-like when he gets around to selling for him and being the best rudo in Japan and shit. Stoker was going for the comedy jokes in this one and you know how much I love that kind of shit. Sumo Fuji does the thing that Taru did with Stoker which was selling being poked in the butt and being poked in the eyes but being oblivious to Stoker's Lariats. They make with comedy jokes! It's not old yet! I'm guessing one more match and the hatred will kick in. Fast forward past the first half and watch the ending with suitably passing interest.

Magnum Tokyo VS. Yoshikazu Taru: TARU continues to be the second best thing to come out of Buko Dojo as he acquits himself pretty well in this- assuming the role of a selling, working Meng- what with the wacky pants and hair. Plus the cool tribal tatoos that hadda hurt ("mad phat ink" as those kids say these days.) He hits his limited POWER ARSENAL and takes a great big Released German onto his be-braided head, earning my respect. This is all GAEAized as Ultimo channels Chigusa and Bill Watts and has Chocoball turn face by assaulting CRAZY MAX

with a bat and then gets the holy hell beaten out of himself in a RAW IS CUT-AWAY Scene In The Back as CRAZY MAX really gives young Kobe the business while Magnum and Taru grapple somewhere else in the building. It even had the crappy pre-taped feel to it that makes me watch anything but American wrestling these days, but I digress...As for the match itself, wellll... I had a couple of quibbles about this match. It was the FOURTH stiffest match on the show and Taru is supposed to be this big badass. I dunno. The highspots were nice, the big finish was built up pretty well but the BOOKING! detracted me from the match at hand as I was waiting for them to switch back to Choco getting beaten to death, or Goldberg walking around, or for Sid to come out and powerbomb both of them or some shit. Either way, it didn't help this match meet the standard that the other Taru vs Magnum match reached- which was a qualified success at the most. I dunno. UD needs to notice that Chigusa does the really great angle AFTER the match is actually over. Either way, in the angle portion that permeated this match, Masaaki Mochizuki- Chocoball having earned his respect- makes the big save when CRAZY MAX goes buckwild on Chocoball and Magnum and a new alliance is formed and actually looks to lead to some pretty good match-ups. After the loss of Chocoball from the MAX, CRAZY MAX looks to be courting Makoto in the DRAGON HARVEST Outdoor Wrestling And Folk Festival. That would be cool- though Makoto won't have SUWA around anymore to make his Springboard Rana TOTALLY SING like SUWA is wont to do.

This show was really great. My hearty recommendation.

~@~

YOUR TENDER LOVING THEME O' THE WEEK: AN AMERICAN FISH OUT OF WATER

#####

TOMMY DREAMER vs. AKIRA TAUE (All Japan 1-19-95 Osaka)- (POGO PETE): "Oh my." It's everyone's Hardcore Hero backinaday when he was still a total candy-ass and his body had yet to self-destruct. Tommy hits two of the worst dropkicks on Taue that you'll ever see... an easy .9 Watts. Tommy slaps on an abdominal stretch, at which point Taue says "Your brush with respectability is now OVA!", kicks the stew out of him and slaps on a much hurtier-looking version of said hold. Tommy tries to come back with a laughable flying shoulderblock, a laughable backdrop and a laughable frog splash as the crowd starts to yell for something good like the comedy match. Taue finally resumes control, hits a turning powerslam and a lariat, and puts the crowd out of their misery with the nodowa for the pin at 4:24. Either the worst Taue match ever or the best Dreamer match ever.

Nasty Boys vs. Chono/Tenzan- WCW- (PHIL RIPPA): Thanks to the bizarre WCW trip to New Japan, there was a plethora of wacko Americans in Japan. Booker T, The Giant, Kursawa, Johnny B Badd and the Blue Bloods were some of the candidates but personally I don't think you can get any closer to bizarro world than the Nasty Boys in Japan. You will be treated to a pre-match screamathon as Knobbs says NASTIZED!!!! about 14 times in a 15 second promo. As you might expect this match was a whole lotta nothing. Unfortunately, Chono and Tenzan are not afraid to mail it in and get themselves fully immersed in a crappy North American Tag Team match. There is a metric ton of piss-poor crowd brawling. I am utterly amazed that the Pit

Stop didn't make its Japanese debut. Chairs are thrown. Fans are bored. Chono does the job. Ugh!

Jumbo Tsuruta vs Tommy Rich- 2/25/83-ALL JAPAN:(DEAN RASMUSSEN) - Before he became a drunken buffoon and underemployed redneck blade freak fighting Doug Gilbert in the locker room over a pack of cigarettes, Rich was considered to be quite the man to bring wrestling into the...uh... Mid-Eighties maybe? Anyway he wrestled Jumbo Tsuruta YEARS before Jumbo became the funnest ass-kicking bastard that ever lived so let's see if this is as disappointing as the match where Jumbo doesn't maul Greg Gagne like he SHOULD have- what with Tsuruta being a legend and all. I mean, Bruiser Brodie was a legend and to prove it he shot on Luger. IT WAS THE LEAST THAT TSURUTA COULD HAVE DONE FOR US! IT'S FUCKING GREG GAGNE THERE, JUMBO- PUNCH HIM IN THE FACE. Anyway, sadistic, irrational hatred for what is surely a kind gentle man aside, this here was an odd match. Jumbo works all stiff and Rich can't muster any offense that looks credible in comparison- as he does TWO lace rakes and heaping helpings of those crappy faux-Dusty Rhodes Crappy Elbows. The psychology of the match was actually pretty good in making up for Rich's gaping Puroresu shortcomings- as the whole point of the match is that Jumbo has a mountain of Offense, all of which can kill our man Wildfire, and Rich has to use everything in his power to avoid Jumbo's myriad of finishers. The whole first section of the match is Tommy and Jumbo showing the audience what Tommy Rich should stay out of if he wants survive and put off the forgone conclusion for as long as possible- as Rich fights out of a Butterfly Suplex and Standing Side Suplex and barely escapes an Abdominal Stretch. I was confused early as Rich starts the whole proceedings by hitting two dropkicks and Tsuruta responds with an Enzuigiri that Rich sold like it was a Robert Gibson dropkick. Wasn't an Enzuigiri quite a devastating move in 1983 in Japan? Was Tommy committeeing a Fuax Pas or am I being nutty again? Anyway, Tommy Rich pretty much matches Jumbo's Strongstyle stiffness with a bunch of 70's US Pro-Style as he grabs a hold and calls elaborate spots that never seem to actually come about and it makes for a good basis for Jumbo to work against as he basically puts Rich through a bunch of finishers. The main thing to the credit of Tommy Rich is that he seems to have wanted to sell stuff longer than Jumbo wanted him too because Jumbo eggs him back into the ring after Jumbo hits a big Splash off the toprope that Rich barely kicks out of. Tommy Rich then does my favorite type of selling by scurrying to the outside to effectively sell the damage more (Ohtani does this quite effectively now). The only thing that seemed to ever put Jumbo in danger was Rich's Lou Thesz press which Rich hits once for a two count. The big transition to the end is Rich's second attempt at a Thesz Press that Jumbo turns into a HotShot (A point of Query: Does this predate Jumbo using the Thesz Press- and the subsequent Jumbo Killer Spot? Someone will know I'm sure. I... just... can't figure...out... WHO.....) Rich kicks out of a Butterfly Suplex, gets in some lowgrade offense to transition to the big suplex. Jumbo hits some High Knees and finally Hits the Side Suplex for the win. I guess the main thing I learned from this is that Tommy rich was a fine wrestler in his day and before everything passed him by and all the sweet booze took over, but his offense was pretty anemic and wasn't enough to compliment his obvious knowledge of how to work an old school match. I dunno. The psychology is far far ahead of Rich's limited physical skills and he is deeply a fish out of water in this setting, where his pathetic forearm uppercuts and comical elbows are supposed to look like a threat to Jumbo frickin' Tsuruta. It does make me wanna see

[illegible][illegible]

YOUR WRESTLER OF THE WEEK... NICK BOCKWINKEL!

#####

There were real problems with the AWA in the 80s. But one thing Verne's group often did right, up until the talent was completely drained by deeper pockets to the east and the Team

Hennig/Bockwinkel was a fine one indeed, one of the best weekly TV show matches of the mid-80s, maybe a whisker below Flair/Windham from Worldwide a couple of months later.

The match started out slow with loads of Mutual Respect and a Feeling Out Process, with Hennig gradually getting the better of Bockwinkel. This was paced to go 60, in a manner not dissimilar to that of classic Flair/Race matches. A lot of 70s style work here, crisply executed and psychologically sound, and the major drama of the match is that of the beleaguered, aging champion Bockwinkel, trying very hard to wrestle cleanly against an upstart Hennig who came off as the future of the artform. I won't spoil the ending for you youngsters, but will tell you that the storyline of this match – two wrestlers locked in combat, trying their damndest to show out and to define the artform – is epic in a way that very few wrestling matches are allowed to be in our age of insider comments and bullshit pandering to the mainstream.

Nick Bockwinkle vs. Bruiser Brodie - San Antonio, TX- (PHIL RIPPA): It is always fun to see Brodie- who I think of as the all-time greatest brawler- wrestle a straight match. (The two out of three fall match against Ric Flair is a must see.) The match is joined in progress at about the 10 minute mark. Lou Thesz is the guest referee so I immediately suspect that a screwjob is coming. But that is probably because nowadays every quest referee match ends with a screwjob.

Bockwinkle is in control, keeping Brodie grounded with a headscissors. Bobby Heenan is yelling at the timekeeper to ring the bell because he is sure Brodie is going to quit. Bruiser finally gets on the advantage and Bockwinkle isn't afraid to show that he can absurdly sell just as much as Terry Funk and Dick Murdoch. Brodie beats on the champ for a while before Heenan interferes. If you want to see someone legitimately scared for their lives, watch the Brain run from Bruiser. Brodie hits the big knee and Heenan punches him in the face to break up the count. That means

.....

seven fists in the face of wrestling

All of my hope, and my inspiration

Our life's pattern's drawn in sand

The memory of your face

\$
